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RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY 6448  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 8492  
RUEHJI/AMCONSUL JEDDAH PRIORITY 1275  
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY 1958  
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HQ USAF FOR X0XX  
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CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR  
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD  
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO ICD  
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL  
PARIS ALSO FOR POL  
ROME FOR MFO

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E.O. 12958: N/A  
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SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

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SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:  
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- [1](#)1. Iran
- [1](#)2. Mideast
- [1](#)3. U.S.-Israel Relations

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Key stories in the media:  
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Major media (lead story in HaQaretz) reported that the U.S.

administration is apparently toughening its stance towards Israel. HaQaretz reported that National Security Advisor Gen. James Jones told a European foreign minister a week ago that unlike the Bush administration, Obama will be "forceful" with Israel. The media reported that White House Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel told the AIPAC conference in a private meeting last night that two states for two peoples is the only solution the U.S. is committed to. He was quoted as saying: "Relations between Israel and the U.S. are unbreakable," adding that "this is the moment of truth for Israel and the Palestinians." He also declared that "Iran is the number-one threat to the Middle East," and noted that it is hard to make progress wherever Tehran is involved in the Middle East.

In his speech to the AIPAC conference, President Shimon Peres defended PM Benjamin Netanyahu as a leader who Qwants to make history.Q He continued: QIn our tradition, making history is making peace. I am sure that peace is his real and profound priority. Yediot headlined: QPeres at NetanyahuQs Service.Q The Jerusalem Post highlighted the part of PeresQs address in which he indicated that the Arab League peace plan could serve as a basis for moving he peace process forward.

Electronic media reported that, in a short address transmitted via satellite from Jerusalem to the AIPAC conference, PM Netanyahu stated his desire to pursue Mideast peace talks, and voiced his concern over Iran's progressing nuclear program. "We seek normalization of economic ties and diplomatic ties," Netanyahu was quoted as saying. "We want peace with the Arab world, but we also want peace with the Palestinians. That peace eluded us for more than 30 years. Six successive prime ministers of Israel and two American presidents have not succeeded in achieving this peace," Netanyahu added. "I believe it's possible to achieve, but I think it requires a fresh approach," Netanyahu said, adding that the new approach he suggests is "pursuing a triple track towards peace between Israel and Palestinians, a political track, a security track and economic track. The [political] track means that we resume peace negotiations without any delay, the sooner the better, without any preconditions." Netanyahu also said: QThe economic track means that we are prepared to move forward to remove as many obstacles as possible to the advancement of the Palestinian economy. We want to work with the Palestinian economy not as a substitute for political negotiations, but as a booster. I want to see that the Palestinian youngsters have a future. I don't want them to be hostages of a cult of death, despair and hate. I want them to have jobs." The PM further said: "This means we can give them a future that means prosperity for all and it proved to be successful in many parts of the world. I believe that this triple track is a realistic path to peace, and I believe that with the cooperation of President Obama and President Abbas we can defy the skeptics, we can surprise the world." Netanyahu was quoted as saying: "Peace will not come without security, so I want to be very clear -- we shall never compromise on Israel's security. Second, for a final peace settlement to be achieved, the Palestinians must recognize Israel as a Jewish state. They must recognize Israel as a nation state of the Jewish people." Netanyahu also remarked on his upcoming meeting with Obama, saying: "I've met President Obama, I respect him and I look forward to seeing him in Washington in a couple of weeks. We plan to continue our common quest for prosperity and for peace." Israel Radio reported that chief PA negotiator Saeb Erekat rejected NetanyahuQs negotiations offer.

Major media reported that a UN inspection committee presented its conclusions about Operation Cast Lead to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. Yediot quoted an Israeli source as saying that if the conclusionsQ language is not softened, this would be an Qearthquake.Q Yediot also quoted Israeli sources who scrutinized the report as saying that its compilers totally ignored information provided by Israel after the operation.

Israel Radio quoted Hamas leader Khaled Mashal as saying in an interview with The New York Times that his group has halted its rocket fire from the Gaza Strip and is willing to accept a temporary two-state solution. He said that Hamas was also eager to reach a cease-fire with Israel, and repeated Hamas's aim of reaching a deal that would involve the release of Gilad Shalit in exchange for hundreds of Palestinian prisoners held by Israel.

Maariv quoted QWestern and American sourcesQ as saying that messages

emanating from Netanyahu indicate that he intends to focus his diplomatic efforts on Syria, not on the Palestinians. The sources were quoted as saying that Netanyahu's move is coordinated with the U.S.

The media reported that, furious at a Spanish judge's decision yesterday to continue investigating Industry, Trade, and Labor Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer, Strategic Affairs Minister Moshe Ya'alon, and five other former top security officials for a 2002 bombing in Gaza that killed top Hamas terrorist Salah Shehadeh and 14 others, Israeli officials said yesterday that Spain's judicial system was being hijacked to attack Israel. There is "no doubt that the filing of the lawsuit in Spain by a Palestinian human rights organization is a cynical move and another attempt to exploit the Spanish legal system to further political actions against Israel," said Yossi Levy, the Foreign Ministry's spokesman for the Hebrew press. Levy said Israel was confident that the Spanish government and judicial system would take all measures necessary to ensure that this move would fail. The judge rejected a request by the Spanish state prosecution that he drop the inquiry. The Jerusalem Post reported that, in order to embarrass Spain, Almagor, the Terror Victims Association, is finalizing a law suit against NATO personnel who approved bombings in Yugoslavia in the 1990s that killed some 2,500 civilians. Several top Spanish nationals including EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana, who served as NATO secretary-general from 1995-1999 are named in Almagor's case, as are officials from other NATO member countries, including the U.S.

The Jerusalem Post quoted the Foreign Ministry as saying that the boycott by Israel and eight other nations improved the outcome of last month's UN anti-racism conference that was held in Geneva.

Yediot and Israel Radio reported that Atty. Pinchas Marinsky is PM Netanyahu's candidate to replace Ofer Dekel as point man on the prisoner issue. Another contender for the post is Col. (res.) Lior Lotan.

The media reported that during his visit to Rome, FM Avigdor Lieberman affirmed Israel's commitment to peace but did not endorse the idea of a Palestinian state as sought by the U.S. and the EU. He stressed the Iranian threat. HaQaretz, Maariv, and The Jerusalem Post quoted a senior UN official as saying yesterday that he would soon travel to Israel to seek an early Israeli withdrawal from parts of the village of Ghajar along the Lebanese border, in line with Security Council Resolution 1701.

The Jerusalem Post reported that Israel is likely to answer questions on its treatment of Palestinian detainees, the alleged existence of a secret interrogation center known as Facility 1391, the closure of the Gaza crossings, and the West Bank security barrier when it appears before the UN Committee against Torture in Geneva today and tomorrow. Israel is one of seven countries under periodic review this year by the committee, which has received reports on Israeli violations of the UN Convention against Torture from at least eight NGOs.

HaQaretz reported that Israel prohibits Israelis from visiting Jerusalem's northern areas, outside the separation fence, unless they coordinate the visits with the defense authorities, which will give them military or police protection.

HaQaretz reported that the Palestinian Authority has established a special counter-intelligence squad in its security services to uncover agents working for Hamas and Hizbullah. To date the PA security services have arrested dozens of Palestinians suspected of collaborating with the two radical Islamic groups. HaQaretz quoted Israeli security sources as saying that the PA has made a focused effort to uncover foreign agents, noting that the new unit involves a large contingent of officers.

HaQaretz quoted Israeli security sources as saying that Syria continues to transfer advanced weaponry to Hizbullah while working to improve its relations with the U.S. The Syrian aid to Hizbullah is interpreted as an attempt to ensure that the militant Lebanese group is sufficiently armed for a possible confrontation with Israel. Syria's intention, according to the analysis, is to provide Hizbullah with sufficiently advanced arms to raise its

strength and capabilities to a level beyond what the group had prior to the Second Lebanon War in July 2006. In parallel, Syria is procuring sophisticated missiles that would enable it to target military bases inside Israel, in case a confrontation with Hizbullah escalates and Damascus is dragged into the conflict.

The Jerusalem Post quoted an Egyptian Foreign Ministry spokesman as saying yesterday that Western policies based on pressuring Iran to give up its nuclear program will fail because they disregard Israel's nuclear capability, which is the first and greatest threat to security in the region. The newspaper reported that Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman Yigal Palmor categorically rejected that classification.

The Jerusalem Post reported that former House Speaker Newt Gingrich told the daily on Sunday, before he addressed the AIPAC conference, that the Obama administration is setting itself on a collision course with Israel and endangering the Jewish State. Gingrich also called the U.S. engagement with Iran a fantasy.

Haaretz reported that PM Netanyahu will make the final decision next week in the dispute between the finance and defense ministries over the proposed defense budget. The Jerusalem Post reported that defense officials warned yesterday that IDF procurement and training plans will likely be harmed if the Treasury makes drastic cuts to the defense budget.

Leading media reported that President Peres is urging the government to yield control of key Christian sites to the Vatican, a position believed to be opposed by Interior Minister Eli Yishai. The Jerusalem Post quoted Rabbi David Rosen, chairman of the International Jewish Committee for Inter-religious Consultations, as saying that the proposal is unlikely to be approved.

Maariv reported that, due to the swine flu epidemic, the Interior Ministry is considering barring foreigners who stayed in Mexico from entering Israel.

Leading media reported that yesterday former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice visited the Jewish Primary Day School in Washington. The Jerusalem Post quoted her as saying that the costs to Iran are mounting. Maariv reported that nine-year-old students embarrassed her by asking about the use of torture during the Bush administration.

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1. Iran:  
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Summary:  
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The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized: Israel isn't arbitrarily trying to switch the discussion away from the Palestinians to Iran. It is warning that a nuclear-armed Iran is the overriding threat -- to Israel, the Arabs, and the West.... Someone is trying to switch the subject all right -- but it isn't Israel.

Block Quotes:  
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"Switching the Subject"

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (5/5): [U.S.] administration officials are reportedly insinuating that the U.S. will only act -- in some unspecified fashion -- on Iran if Washington can muster an alliance of European and Arab countries. For that to happen, as The New York Times put it Monday, Israel -- if it wants the world to confront Iran -- needs to work toward an end to the occupation, halt settlement construction, and foster the creation of a Palestinian state. If this truly is Obama's position, frankly, we don't get it. Does America really feel hamstrung in confronting Iran without Arab and European support? Aren't the Arabs privately -- and insistently -- telling American envoys that they are as worried about Iran as Israel is?.... Israel isn't arbitrarily trying to switch the discussion away from the Palestinians to Iran. It is warning that a nuclear-armed Iran is

the overriding threat -- to Israel, the Arabs, and the West. We are saying that the reason there is no Palestinian state is principally attributable to the intransigent, unrealistic and self-defeating Palestinian negotiating position which, if anything, will become less malleable should the mullahs get the bomb. Iran's proxies, Hamas and Hizbullah, would become even more puffed-up. Someone is trying to Qswitch the subjectQ all right -- but it isn't Israel.

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12. Mideast:  
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Summary:  
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Daphna Golan, who teaches law at the Hebrew University, wrote in the independent, left-leaning HaQaretz: QThe enormous notices [in local Jerusalem newspapers] testify to new construction in all the occupied territories around Jerusalem.

Block Quotes:  
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"For Sale: Great Location"

Daphna Golan, who teaches law at the Hebrew University, wrote in the independent, left-leaning HaQaretz (5/5): QIt's to be hoped that the White House gets a subscription to one of the local Jerusalem newspapers ahead of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's visit to Washington. Simply leafing through the giant advertisements would save American and Israeli taxpayers significant amounts of time, money and grief.... The enormous notices ... testify to new construction in all the occupied territories around Jerusalem.... When American taxpayers are being forced to deal with cutbacks, we can spare them the money they invest in the construction and maintenance of the settlements. Instead of investing time and resources in attempting to understand why Israel insists on building roads, neighborhoods and settlements for Israelis only, the White House could obtain a yearly subscription to one of the Jerusalem dailies. It could also inform the Israeli Prime Minister and his cohorts that they will be welcome to come and discuss continued American support once construction for Israelis in the occupied territories has truly come to an end.

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13. U.S.-Israel Relations:  
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Summary:  
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Dov Weisglass, who was former prime minister Ariel Sharon's top diplomatic advisor, wrote in the mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot: QThis week AIPAC -Q the Jewish pro-Israel lobby -Q is celebrating two important events.

Block Quotes:  
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"The Jewish Model"

Dov Weisglass, who was former prime minister Ariel Sharon's top diplomatic advisor, wrote in the mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (5/5): QThis week AIPAC -Q the Jewish pro-Israel lobby - is celebrating two important events: its annual conference and the cancellation of strange indictments against two of its senior officials. Indeed, this is the opportunity to say a few words of appreciation and thanks to this important organization. The core of AIPAC's activity is the development of Israel-U.S. links. It has been endowed with deep knowledge of both the U.S. and the Israeli governments, and fundamental understanding of all aspects of binational connections. AIPAC is sensitive about and aware of any possibility of failures in the relationship. It does a great deal

to prevent them.... AIPAC has earned worldwide appreciation for its status as a political, effective tool in relations between the Diaspora and the Jewish people in Israel.

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